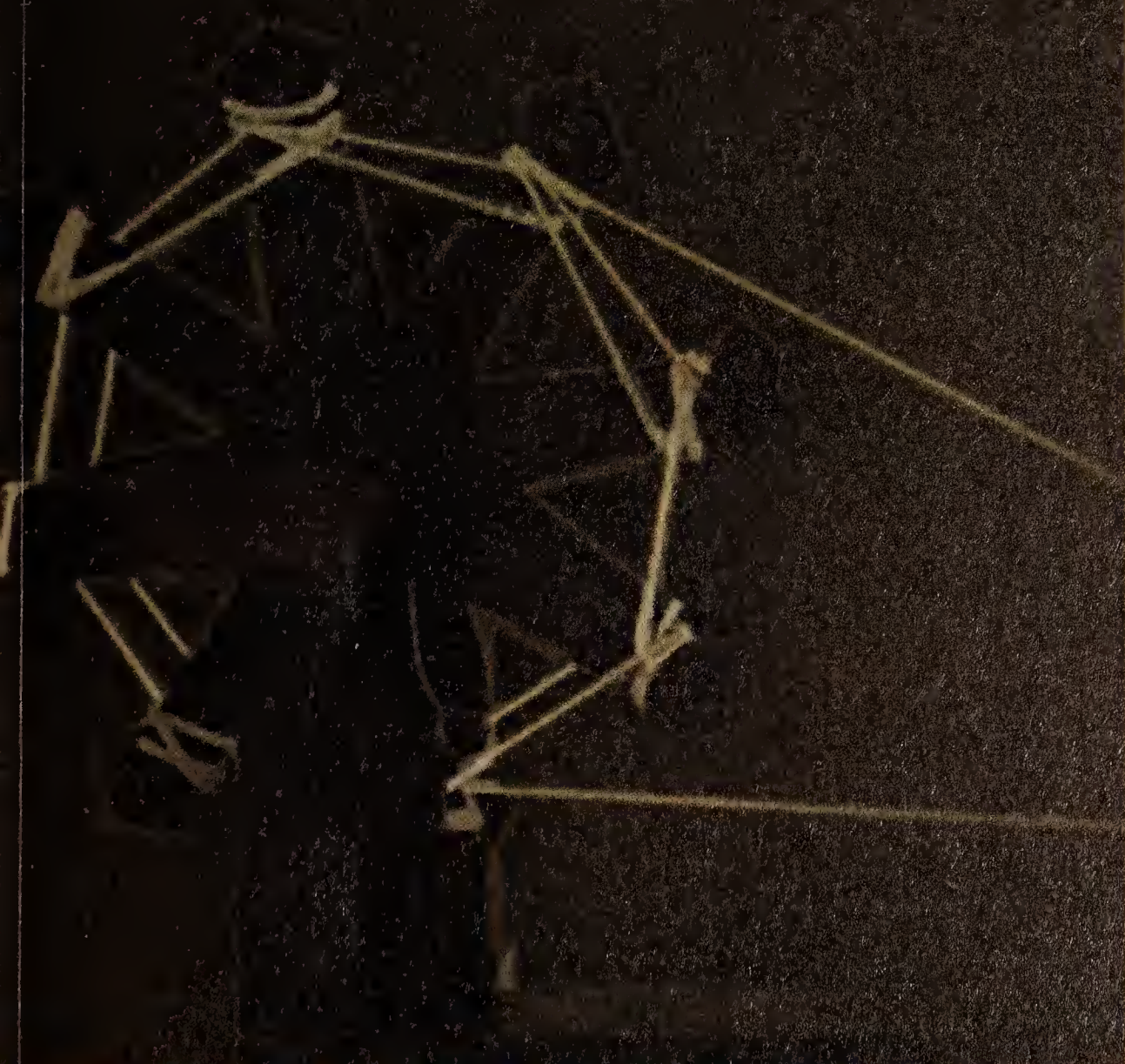


THE HISTORY OF INDIA



THE FUTURE OF INDIA



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FOREWORD

“...That does not finish the picture. We have the education of this future state. I say without fear of my figures being challenged successfully, that today India is more illiterate than it was fifty or a hundred years ago, and so is Burma, because the British administrators, when they came to India, instead of taking hold of things as they were, began to root them out. They scratched the soil and began to look at the root, and left the root like that, and the beautiful tree perished. The village schools were not good enough for the British administrator, so he came out with his programme. Every school must have so much paraphernalia, building, and so forth. Well, there were no such schools at all. There are statistics left by a British administrator which show that, in places where they have carried out a survey, ancient schools have gone by the board, because there was no recognition for these schools, and the schools established after the European pattern were too expensive for the people, and therefore they could

not possibly overtake the thing. I defy anybody to fulfill a programme of compulsory primary education of these masses inside of a century. This very poor country of mine is ill able to sustain such an expensive method of education. Our state would revive the old village schoolmaster and dot every village with a school both for boys and girls."

(MAHATMA GANDHI AT CHATHAM HOUSE, LONDON, OCTOBER 20, 1931)

...I have not left off the pursuit of the subject of education in the villages during the pre-British period. I am in correspondence with several educationists. Those who have replied to support my view but do not produce authority that would be accepted as proof. My prejudice or presentiment still makes me cling to the statement I made at Chatham House. I don't want to write haltingly in Harijan. You don't want me merely to say that the proof I had in mind has been challenged by you!

(GANDHIJI TO SIR PHILIP HARTOG, SEGAON, AUGUST, 1939)"

From Shri Dharampal's The Beautiful Tree (1984)

Mahatma Gandhi delivered a long speech titled The Future of India at the Royal Institution of International Affairs at Chatham House on 20th October, 1931. A speech that was wide-ranging but had one crucial underpinning thought, the decay

caused by the British rule to the well functioning institutions of our country. The institutions ranged from health to education. Gandhi ji did not make these remarks lightly, he had found time in his very busy public life to pursue the research undertaken by the British on the state of education during the process of their political conquest of the country.

The importance of this speech also lies in inspiring the pioneering work of Shri Dharampal who sought to examine the speech in the light of cold historical facts. The result of his research leads to four magisterial works on history, one of them “The Beautiful Tree” dealt with education surveys undertaken in the 18th and 19th centuries in Madras, Bihar, and Bengal. The records showed the importance accorded to education in our country, primary education was almost universal, there was provision for higher education, it was an education for knowledge, it was self-directed, innovative, and rooted in the ethos of the country.

The road to becoming the vishwaguru has to go through the route of Indian culture, ethics, and values. These values, ethics, and culture have to be a part of our education system, our system of innovation and research.

The speech by Gandhi Ji is a beacon guiding us towards creating a meaningful education, one that can lead to resurgent India. Resurgence is not

about economic, social, or scientific development alone, it has to be one where all three are actively happening together in perfect harmony along with elevated ethical value. A system of education that is tasked with building a model student, who can, in turn, create and manage institutions and thus build a great country. We need people with the qualities of compassion, humanism, a spirit of enquiry, humour, mindful existence, positive thinking and the intent to be good and do good. That is the future of India envisaged by Gandhi ji, and in this year that starts his 150th year birth celebrations, we must work together towards realising it.

New Delhi
29.09.2018

Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi
Member Secretary
IGNCA

The Future of India by Mahatma Gandhi

**A speech delivered at
The Royal Institution of International Affairs
on 20th October, 1931.**

Mahatma Gandhi spoke at Chatham House meeting in London. This speech was published in the journal of International Affairs.

“You were good enough to say that I have spared from my busy time a few moments to address a gathering under the auspices of this Institute. I must confess that I seize every opportunity I can of coming into touch with British public opinion and putting before them the purpose of my mission. I have therefore come before you quite selfishly, and I hope that the words I speak

to you this evening will find a lodgment in your hearts. At the end of what I have to say I should like you to cross-examine me and ask me any questions you may like to put. I have found by experience that that is the only way of removing the mists of misunderstanding. I have noticed that the greatest stumbling-block in my way is the hopeless ignorance of the true facts of the situation, through no fault of yours; you belong to one of the busiest nations in the world, you have your own problems, and at the present moment this great island of yours is going through a crisis such as you have never had to face within living memory. My whole heart goes out to you in your troubles, and I hope that you will soon be able, with your marvellous energy, to cut a way out of them.

No wonder, however, that, preoccupied as you are, you find no time to study the problems that affect a distant land like India. It is therefore a matter of keen pleasure to me that so many of you have found time to come here and listen to what I may have to say. I only feel grieved that many of you who are listening to my voice are unable to find accommodation in this room. With these preliminary words, I plunge into my subject.

In order to give you a description of the future of India as I conceive it, I shall tell you in as few words as possible what India is at present. India is a sub-continent by itself, nineteen hundred miles long, fifteen hundred miles wide, with a population of roughly 350 millions. Of these about 210 millions are Hindus, 70 millions are Mussalmans, 3 millions are Sikhs; there is also a fairly large Indian Christian population, and a very small European or, more correctly speaking, English population. Numerically it is insignificant, but, as you know, it enjoys a position of privilege and influence unsurpassed, belonging as it does to the ruling race. We have within this population our own Hindu-Muslim-Sikh problem, or, as it are called, the problem of minorities.

I will not go into the problem as it affects other minorities, nor will I take up your time by airing my views with regard to these minorities, but one minority I may not omit, the unhappy untouchables, a word which is a standing reproach to the Hindus of India who form the majority of the population. Untouchability is a curse upon Hinduism, and I have no hesitation in saying that, if untouchability is not rooted out of Hinduism, Hinduism must perish. The time has

come when any system, no matter how hoary and ancient it may be, must stand the light of day, must be able to stand fierce criticism, and if Hinduism harbors untouchability, it has no place on this earth. I am glad to tell you that Congress has made the removal of untouchability an integral part of its programme, and under the inspiration of Congress there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of young Hindu reformers who have dedicated their lives to the removal of this blot upon Hinduism and upon India. These young men and women are reaching a hand to these untouchables in a variety of ways. We are digging wells for them, opening schools for them, building new temples for them and opening up old temples for them. We are giving to twenty-five thousand untouchable women, if not more, work in their own homes.

We have introduced them to spinning-wheels. We have found for several thousand untouchables their old occupation of rough weaving, which had died out owing to the competition of modern manufactured cloth. This meant that they had taken either to scavenging or to some other occupation, because of their inability to earn their livelihood from this noble hereditary occupation

of weaving. Thanks to God and to the efforts of these young reformers, several thousand untouchables have thus recovered their old occupation of rough weaving. There are several families who were heavily indebted and who now are not only free from debts but have laid by a decent sum. One family I can recollect has laid by what in India a very respectable sum for a poor family two thousand rupees. This family is in demand all over India as teachers, because both husband and wife are accomplished weavers and conscientious and skilled workers. You can imagine how much self-respect they must have gained, owing to their being wanted as teachers and not as scavengers and treated almost as a plague.

That is a very important minority, important in the sense that it deserves all the sympathy and all the aid that can be given to it. I have not a shadow of doubt that this untouchability is going very fast, and if, through God's grace, India comes to her own as a result of the deliberations of the Round Table Conference or otherwise, you will find that untouchability has gone forever. But I have not yet finished my description of India as it is. What is this 350 million population doing? More than

eighty-five per cent of this population is engaged in agriculture and is living in seven hundred thousand villages, dotted over the vast surface that I have described. There are some villages in India which have a population of not more than a hundred souls; there are, again, villages which have a population of as many as five thousand. Now Indian agriculture depends very largely it has to upon its precarious rainfall. In parts of that subcontinent, like Cherapunji, you have a deluge of rain, as much as 600 inches. In other parts, like Sind and Central India, for example you have hardly 5 inches. And then, often, it is not equally distributed. Agricultural holdings are anything between one acre, or three quarters of an acre, and two and a half acres. I think, taking province by province, in no province are the holdings, on the average, more than two and a half or three acres per head. I am open to correction, but I think I am not far out, and there are thousands upon thousands who have less than one acre, and again tens of thousands who are absolutely landless, and who are therefore living in India as serfs, one might almost say as slaves.

It cannot be called a state of legal slavery, but it is really a state bordering on slavery. This population, because all the rainfall is concentrated within two, three, four or five months at the outside, lives without any continuous occupation for nearly six months of the year. In some places where there are double crops, the absence of occupation extends over a period of four months, but, roughly speaking, you may say that these agriculturists of India are without any constant occupation for half the year that being so; there is deep and ever-deepening poverty among the masses. The average income of the people for the whole of India is two pence per day. If the average income of these 350 million people is two pence a day and in calculating this average the wealth of a few millionaires is included you will have no difficulty in understanding that there are tens of thousands of people who do not even earn two pence per day. The result is that nearly one-tenth of the population is living in a condition of semi-starvation.

They have no more than one meal per day, consisting of stale chapati and a pinch of dirty salt. There is no such thing as bread. They do not know from year's end to year's end what milk is, or even skimmed milk; they do not know

what butter is; they do not know what oil is; they never get green vegetables. That is the condition of the vast mass of sunken humanity in India. I have now to tell you what should be, and, if the Congress had its way, would be the future state of India. I have not filled in the picture with the cities because the cities do not make India; it is the villages which make India. Nor have I put in the Princes; the Princes also have a portion of these villages, and the life of the villagers in British India. If there is any difference, and there is some, it is a difference of degree and in no sense a difference of kind. Princes will come and Princes will go, empires will come and empires will go, but this India living in her villages will remain just as it is. Sir Henry Maine has left a monograph. *The Village Communities of India*, in which you will find the author saying that all these villages were at one time, and are to a certain extent now, self-contained "little republics".

They have their own culture, mode of life, and method of protecting themselves, their own village schoolmaster, their own priest, carpenter, and barber, in fact everything that a village could want. There is certainly today no kind

of government to be seen in the villages, but whatever their life is, these villages are self-contained, and if you went there, you would find that there is a kind of agreement under which they are built. From these villages has perhaps arisen what you call the iron rule of caste. Caste has been blight on India, but it has also acted as a sort of protecting shield for these masses. But I must not take you into the intricacies of this caste system. What I am trying to give you is as faithful a picture as possible of India as it is at present. I must also not detain you with the impress that British rule has left on India, what that rules is today and what it accounts for.

I have dwelt upon that at other meetings and you have some of the literature; but you have no literature on the future of India. I could not possibly have given you a picture of the future unless I had given you this background. If I tell you more about this peasantry of India, you will not now be surprised. The Congress has made it an article of faith that the test of its work and its progress shall be the measure of its becoming a predominantly present organization, and we have set for ourselves this rule, that we shall not consider any interest in India which is in conflict

with the fundamental well-being of this eighty per cent of the population. Then, what should the government of that population be? The foremost thing that the future State of India would look after would be the economic welfare of these masses. You will therefore have no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that, then, this Government is going to find some occupation for these idle six months of the year for the peasant. That should really be the primary concern of any person who undertakes this gigantic task. By a process of elimination we have come to the conclusion that for this homogeneous population you must have one predominant occupation.

You must have an easy occupation; you must have tools for that occupation that can easily be made in the villages, and the product of the village industry must be capable of being consumed by the villagers. If you can give some occupation which will answer all these tests, you will have a process of production and distribution, self-contained and without any other intermediary having to be resorted to. Such an occupation was the ancient occupation of hand-spinning and hand-weaving. I will not now take you through the history of how it was destroyed. But

you find that, due to the Congress, the Spinners' Association is penetrating as quickly as it can the thousands of villages of India.

We have in this manner penetrated two thousand villages. This occupation has nearly doubled the income of the villagers. You will understand what two pence added to two pence means to a poor man; it means, I suggest, a fortune. You will then take all the occupations necessary in connection with cotton, from hand-spinning and hand-weaving to printing, dyeing and washing. When you take into consideration all these occupations, it does govern the income of the people, and when we have done that, we have given these people a little bit of hope and courage and have put a little luster into their eyes. If you walked with me in the villages of Orissa, you would see walking death throughout the length and breadth of that thrice-afflicted land. You see specimens of humanity, not voluntarily but compulsorily, mere skin and bone without any flesh on their limbs.

If we give them this occupation, we put into them new life and new hope. But the activity of the new State will not stop there. These people are living

in utter ignorance of sanitation and we have to look after the hygienic conditions. So we try to introduce the hygienic methods of Dr. Poor, who has written a volume on village hygiene. Briefly speaking, it consists of turning human excreta into manure. The Chinese people are the greatest people of the earth in the knowledge of the use of these human excreta, and Dr. Poor says the Chinese were his teachers in discovering the economic treatment. We are trying to do two things to add to the wealth of the nation and to the health of the nation and if we teach the people this method of treating human excreta, the result will be that we shall rid ourselves somewhat of the plague of flies, and sterilize to some extent the poisonous mosquito— not fully, I know, but it is in the right direction. Then we must give them some medical assistance in his malaria ridden country. India suffers from many diseases, but malaria is essentially a disease induced by want.

It is not to be driven away by simply giving the villagers packets of quinine. Quinine is essential, but it is useless unless you can give them some milk or some fruit, as their digestive apparatus is not capable of taking anything else. So we are trying to give them some simple medical aid

where we can. I am not trying to give you an idea that we have already done this, but I am talking of the future State, not as a visionary but as a practical man. We have tried this on a small scale, and if I can multiply this activity through the aid of the future State, you will understand what India can be without a vast outlay. We give this medical aid, not through the very expensive methods that the Western doctors teach us, but we revive our own ancient treatment. Every village once had its own medical man. You may say he was a quack and that he was extremely ignorant of the elementary principles which govern this little body of ours; all which is very true. But all the same he was a man who could give them some comfort, and, the occupation being hereditary, where he was not dishonest man, he really served an efficient purpose.

If you give him this elementary knowledge of hygiene, which is preventive medicine, and teach him this simple way of curing the people of malaria, you have gone a very long way. What I am telling you today is a thing that was approved by the Surgeon-General of the Bombay Presidency. When he came to see me whilst I was lying in the Sassoon Hospital, he

was discussing it with me, and I told him, “Your English methods are too expensive for this poor country, and if you want to treat a village through your method, it would take two or three centuries.” He agreed and said, “What would you do?” So I told him my plan. That does not finish the picture. We have the education of this future State. I say without fear of my figures being challenged successfully, that today India is more illiterate than it was fifty or a hundred years ago, and so is Burma, because the British administrators, when they came to India, instead of taking hold of things as they were, began to root them out. They scratched the soil and began to look at the root, and left the root like that, and the beautiful tree perished.

The village schools were not good enough for the British administrator, so he came out with his programme. Every school must have so much paraphernalia, building, and so forth. Well, there were no such schools at all. There are statistics left by a British administrator which show that, in places where they have carried out a survey, ancient schools have gone by the board, because there was no recognition for these schools, and the schools established after

the European pattern were too expensive for the people, and therefore they could not possibly overtake the thing. I defy anybody to fulfil a programme of compulsory primary education of these masses inside of a century. This very poor country of mine is ill able to sustain such an expensive method of education. Our State would revive the old village schoolmaster and dot every village with a school both for boys and girls, Then, although British people have spent millions in completing some irrigation works, we claim that their progress in that work has not been as quick as it might have been.

The military railways, which have done some good, no doubt, in transporting goods from one place to another, have done nothing of what irrigation would have done. These irrigation schemes were and are really too expensive to cover the whole of India. We have, however, our own ancient method of irrigation: deep-well irrigation in some parts, in other parts well irrigation that is not deep well. I must confess my ignorance of this, but an Englishman, who is trying experiments in intensive agriculture, and who is now here, was telling me that he had been working in the poet Tagore's village.

It was Mr. Elmhurst who really gave life to that village experiment, and owing to it they were opening canal irrigation. The works which did not require any skill other than that produced in those villages. He tells me they have compelled the Government to recognize the superiority of this method. I am simply giving you the evidence that this man gave to me about this canal irrigation, but I do know that there are ancient methods of irrigation compatible with the capacity of the people. I have told you what we would do constructively, but we should have to do something destructive also. Otherwise we should not be able to carry on, because this India today is ill able to afford the revenue that is being forced from it from year's end to year's end in order to support an insupportable weight of military and civil expenditure. The military expenditure takes 62 crores an enormous sum for this country whose average income is two pence a day. Compare that with the military expenditure of any country on earth, and you will find that India is groaning under a weight that is insupportable.

We should immediately set about restoring the scales, and if I could possibly have my

way, we should get rid of three quarters of the military expenditure. If we really succeed in demonstrating that we have won our freedom through non-violent means, the people of India will not require much argument to convince them that non-violence will also enable them to retain their freedom. Congress does not fear the bugbear of Afghan invasion, or invasion from Japan, certainly not invasion from Bolshevik Russia. Congress has no such fear whatever, and if we understand the lesson of non-violent non-co-operation, then no nation on earth can bend us to its will. If the nation simply learns one single English word and we have a similar expression in our Indian languages also we can simply say, “No”, and it is finished for any invader who casts hungry eyes on India. We are convinced that we do not need the arms that India is carrying. For civil expenditure I must give an instance which I have given at several meetings:

Here the Prime Minister gets fifty times the average income; the Viceroy in India gets five thousand times the average income. From this one example you can work out for yourselves what this civil expenditure also means to India.

India cannot support this service, however efficient and able it may be. It is quite likely that, if I could send medical experts to every village in India, we should have no disease whatever, but since we cannot afford medical experts for every village in India, we have to be satisfied with quacks that we can get in our own villages. No country on earth can possibly live beyond its means; it can only take such services as it can afford to pay for. If I want strawberries and cream for every villager, I know it is a day-dream and I should be an idiot if I wished to give them to every villager. Well, I tell you that this military and civil expenditure is strawberries and cream. I cannot possibly deal out this food for my people. I have very nearly finished my picture; if you find vacant spots, please remind me and I shall fill them by answering your questions.

Q. Would not Mr. Gandhi admit that within living memory the resisting power of the rural masses to the economic breakdown produced by a failure of crops had been enormously increased, and that the famine codes in India had been brought to a high degree of perfection at a time when the increased prosperity of the masses had rendered them unnecessary?

Mr. Gandhi replied that his experience was that the resisting power of the people had not increased, but that railway transport enabled people to get grain from other places which they had not formerly been able to obtain.

SIR PHILIP HARTOG: Would Mr. Gandhi give his authority for the statement that literacy had diminished in India during the last fifty years?

Mr. Gandhi replied that his authority was the Punjab Administration Reports, and said that he had published in Young India a study of the Punjab educational statistics.

SIR PHILIP HARTOG: Would Mr. Gandhi explain why the literacy figure was fourteen per cent of the men and only two per cent of the women, and why illiteracy was higher to Kashmir and Hyderabad than in British India?

Mr. Gandhi replied that the women's education had been neglected, to the shame of the men. He could only conjecture, with regard to the figures for Kashmir, that if illiteracy was greater there, it was due to the negligence of the ruler

was in correspondence with Western thinkers all over Europe and America on the subject, and he had come definitely to the conclusion that the methods of birth-control suggested by modern reformers would be found upon experience to have been death-traps. Even though it might be proved that in England, Holland, France, other parts of Europe and some parts of America, this method of controlling birth-rate might have done some good, it could only do immeasurable harm in India, where it was not possible to give these remedies to the people. It was wicked for anybody to suggest these remedies for India when India could not understand these methods in any shape or form.

Q. Would Mr. Gandhi state briefly on what principle a strong, stable Executive could be framed for India?

Mr. Gandhi replied that a strong, stable Executive Government could best be framed by getting strong, stable hearts, and there was no dearth of such hearts in India. He had not dwelt on the political side, because the future of India as he had been picturing it, did not admit of much political treatment. The cure of the disease of

economic misery was economic, but he was dabbling in politics because it was impossible to deal with economics unless he also dealt with politics. He had given his political faith from many platforms, and had taken it for granted that the audience knew the principles which guided Congress, but he was willing to give his political faith again if desired. He believed with Tolstoy that that country was best governed which was governed the least, and if Congress had its way, the politician would not be allowed to invade the privacy and sanctity of the home, but would be called upon to keep his place.

Q. How far was the very honourable attitude of the Brahmin reformers shared by caste Hindus throughout the country?

Mr. Gandhi said the attitude was very largely shared by those who called themselves Congressmen, but there was very great headway to make. The harvest was ripe, but the labourers were undoubtedly few. There were a few thousand, whilst tens of thousands were needed in order to get rid of the corruption which had injured the fibre of the nation. He could say with assurance that untouchability was going

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Bannerman had said that good government was no substitute for self-government. The British were past-masters in the art of making mistakes, and Lord Salisbury said they knew the art of blundering through to success. Why should the British deprive the Indians of their right to make mistakes? India was impatient of the control which denied her that right. Although his creed was non-violence, he would risk the calamity to which Sir Henry Gidney had referred. But what mistakes could they make? The minorities should all have protection, but there were ways and ways of granting it. India must regain the freedom which she had lost so long, with British help if it were given, without it if it were withheld. He appealed not only to the British but to the whole of humanity that this nation, which was trying an experiment in non-violence on a scale unknown to history, should receive its full measure of support from the nations of the world. Did the British know whether they had conferred benefit on India, or did the Indians know?

Would the British be judged by their own testimony or by the testimony of men like Dadabhai Naoroji, Ranade, Gokhale, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta men who doted on England

and were proud of the Western civilization, who said that, although Englishmen meant well, their rule had on the whole been harmful to India because they left an emasculated nation? If after a century of British rule the result of withdrawing was expected to be fighting amongst Indians themselves, who was to blame? British rule had left them utterly helpless. He recognized that they were helpless, and he wanted British help, but on his terms; India could not afford to have door-keepers who demanded such high wages. If India paid them seventy-five per cent of her earnings, how could she keep body and soul together on the remaining twenty-five per cent? It was a matter of simple arithmetic. The nation was impoverished by the many burdens under which it was groaning, and as he had travelled incessantly all over India from 1916 to 1931, except for the periods when he was in prison, he could claim to know the condition of the villages better than any British officer. He was prepared to evolve his own Constitution, and when the minorities question was flung into his face, his patience was exhausted. What was this bugbear of the minority problem?

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Congress was not merely one of the many political organizations. It was predominantly the one organization that had given battle and had suffered. Hundreds of villages were oppressed, their crops were destroyed and thousands of rupees' worth of land confiscated and sold. This suffering was voluntarily gone through at the bidding of the Congress. Who would go through that suffering for a mess of pottage? He had come to plead with what was finest in the British character and to tell them the whole truth. If, at the end of that chapter, he was told that nothing could be done unless he could close with the Moslems and everybody else, then he would go, but the British would have committed another blunder. They must remember that the Round Table Conference delegates were all nominated by the Prime Minister, not elected like the members of the House of Commons whom no one could remove. They represented no one but the will of the Prime Minister.

The Congress was the only organization representing the whole of India. Those who fought and went to jails were not all Hindus. They had several thousand Mussalmans amongst them, and Sikhs and Christians too. The Congress might

be called a majority community if they liked, and the Congress had its own scheme of solving the minority's problem. The scheme presented for acceptance was an organic scheme in the cause of unity. The Congress majority did not speak as Hindus; Hindus could be reduced to a minority. The Constitution to be framed was for Indians, not for Hindus. How could the Congress parcel out India among several sections of Hindus, and several sections of Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and the rest? Imagine the whole nation vivisected and torn to pieces; how could it be made into a nation with all these divided groups? That was what the minorities wanted. These minorities had a perfect right to full civil, social and religious liberty, and they could appeal to the electorate for election in the open field. Why did they want special electorates? Why did the Anglo-Indians fear to trust to the general mass of the electorate?

Not because they were Anglo-Indian, but because they had not served India. The Parsees did not want any special reservations, simply because they had served India, and were sure to be represented by right of service. The grand-daughters of Dadabhai Naoroji, brought up in

the lap of luxury, had so served India that no one could deny them the right to represent the people. If members of other minorities entered by the open door and served India, they also would be elected. There was no room for those who wanted to maintain special privileges. It was a shame that Englishmen should claim privileges in so poor a country and special seats on a poor people's legislature. Why should they not depend on the vote of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and everyone to enter the legislature? They need not want to enter by the vote of a handful of Englishmen. The English still had power enough. The Indians still needed their unrivalled skill and faculty for organization, probably their capital; why did they fear for their security? They could live in India in perfect safety. If they asked for a passport of safety, he could understand, but if they asked for a special privilege to enter the legislature, he would not be a party to that guilt. There were not two millions of them. It was a claim that would be rejected before any tribunal of judges. At any rate he would in no case be party to the vivisection of a whole nation."

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "Inadvertently, I have no doubt, you have omitted to sign your letter,

but as the address is fully given, I am hoping that this letter will reach you. You will realize that I could not off hand give you the date, but since you would gladly study the whole question, I would find out the numbers of Young India in which the articles appeared and send the references to you. I shall also find out what is possible to prove with reference to the other Provinces, apart from the deductions that I have drawn from the Punjab. Meanwhile, I have no difficulty in drawing the deduction for the rest of the Provinces from the examples of the Punjab and Burma. Whatever may be the strides made by the Punjab during the past five or ten years cannot affect the argument that I have advanced to you. About Kashmir, as I said in reply, mine was merely a conjecture, but since you are so interested in the question, I shall try and find out the true state of education in Kashmir. You are quite right in feeling certain that, if there were any error in my reasoning or the facts that I stated, I should immediately correct them, and whilst I should try to verify more fully the statements that I made, you will also on your part oblige me by giving me such information as may be in your possession and as may help me to understand the truth."

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, “I am much obliged to you for your letter of the 17th inst. I do not propose just now to withdraw the statement I made at the meeting at Chatham House. At the present moment I have not got any time for searching the records to which you are making reference. I, how-ever, promise not to forget the matter, and if I find that I cannot support the statement made by me at Chatham House, I will give my retraction much wider publicity than the Chatham House speech could ever attain. Meanwhile I am endeavouring to find out the references you want.”

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, “I am sorry I was unable, owing to circumstances beyond my control, to fulfil the promise I gave you about my statement on the condition of primary education in India during the pre-British time. Immediately on my landing I entrusted the research to Advocate Munshi, a member of the Bombay University Senate, and two other educationist friends. But they too like me find themselves civil resistance prisoners. I had asked Advocate Munshi to put himself in direct touch with you. But his arrest came so soon after mine that I hardly think he could have corresponded with you. As I am permitted to

carry on non-political correspondence, I have now asked Prof. Shah to test my statement and give you the result of his test. As I found in you a fellow-seeker after the truth, I was most anxious to give you satisfaction either by confirming my statement or withdrawing it as publicly as I had made it. I thought that I would tell you what I had done in pursuance of my promise. As I have not your private address by me, I am sending this to you under care India Office.”

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, “On reading the last sentence a dear friend wrote to me a fiery letter and challenged me to produce my authority for my remark. He said that I had been hasty in making the statement. I did not realize the importance of the rebuke. I did, however, want to produce support for my statement. I put Pyarelal and later Mahadev on the search. It is not always an easy task to find support for impressions one carries when speaking or writing. Meanwhile I received a letter from Lord Samuel supporting the contradiction of the friend referred to above. Whilst I was having the search made I got the following letter from Sir Philip HARTOG: May I take the opportunity of saying that I agree with what my friend Mr. Polak and Lord Samuel tell

me they have written to you about the attitude of the German Jewish refugees, of whom I have myself seen hundreds since 1933? I have never heard one of them express publicly or privately the desire for a war of vengeance against Germany. Indeed such a war would bring further misery to the hundreds of thousands of Jews still in Germany as well as untold suffering to millions of other innocent men and women.”

References:

SPEECH AT CHATHAM HOUSE MEETING,
LONDON, October 20, 1931

LETTER TO SIR PHILIP HARTOG, October 23, 1931

LETTER TO SIR PHILIP HARTOG, November 19, 1931

LETTER TO PHILIP HARTOG, February 15, 1932

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